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What Barriers to the Adoption of Biodiversity-Friendly Cocoa?

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Although not fully demonstrated, one can assume that the collapse of biodiversity linked with 'monoculture-like' systems does contribute to negatives externalities such as fertility loss, increasing pressure from weeds, pests and diseases (for instance pests switching to the mono-crop because of the disappearance of their original host trees in natural forest). Finally these environmental externalities are re-internalized. Producers who use these 'monoculture-like' systems are frequently hit by rocketing maintenance costs and additional re-planting costs.
One can thus assume that systems favouring certain forms of diversification and biodiversity make ecological and economic sense, and result in better cocoa sustainability in all senses of the term, including farmers' revenues and patrimony. Under these assumptions, what are the barriers to 'biodiversity-friendly cocoa'? What conditions are needed to make biodiversity-friendly cocoa' production a mainstream business? Are research and extension services able to offer technical alternatives to smallholders? Are these alternatives really economically efficient in the short term and can they be adopted by farmers?
Besides a review of the literature, the method is based on small samples of cocoa farms (40 to 100) surveyed between the late 1990s and the mid-2010s.
One possible option would be to combine certification of biodiversity-friendly cocoa and that of timber trees owned, planted and regenerated by smallholders (a kind of PSE). This double certification could reduce costs and perhaps serve a springboard for timber-cocoa systems. However, in the long term, the most elegant and widely-applicable solution would be to contribute to an institutional environment in which farmers would wish to regenerate and plant timber trees themselves. To achieve this goal, the first condition is to 'allow' farmers full access to timber markets, which implies they would receive the full market price for their timber.

Keywords: Deforestation, Monoculture, timber, tree-tenure, agrochemicals.

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